



## LIBERIA MEDIA DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

2015- 2020 | Implementer: **INTERNEWS**

The primary goal of the program is to increase citizens' access to independent and reliable information and empower them to engage in well-informed public discussion of important issues of the day. The program support focuses on commercial media outlets and community radio stations.

Specifically, the Liberia Media Development activity will lead to:

- Increased sustainability of media houses;
- A plurality of voices represented in Liberian media and improved quality of the media;
- Improved professional standards of journalism;
- Strengthened normative-legal enabling environment for freer media; and,
- Strengthened Independent Information Commission to be able to respond rapidly to requests from citizens and media establishments.

### **Current Activities**

- Business management mentoring and training to media outlets to develop alternative revenue streams
- Assistance to transition UNMIL Radio assets to the local media market
- Media Market Forum continued to stimulate advertising income from businesses, thereby improving the financial sustainability of local media outlets
- Equipment upgrades and ongoing training and mentoring to 21 community radio stations throughout the country to improve citizens' access to independent and reliable information
- Media law reform advocacy through conferences, meetings and high level engagement of the main stakeholders
- Information Commission strengthened so that it can enforce, oversee, and monitor the implementation of Liberia's Freedom of Information (FOI) Act

### **Accomplishment to Date**

- Undertook capacity-building interventions, business management training, and station upgrades for 21 community radio stations in all 15 counties of Liberia, enabling the stations to support effective and balanced coverage of the upcoming elections and other important local and national issues
- FOI Act strengthened by training leading journalists to use the legislation as a central tool in their investigative reporting, resulting in 51 FOI requests and 14 stories to date
- Media strengthening and community dialog activities conducted around the recent bi-election in Foya, Lofa County, resulting in a more informed electorate
- Press Union of Liberia supported to create a Journalist Code of Conduct, which includes special conduct requirements for the press during the upcoming elections, and outlines the actions journalists need to take in order to live up to their morals and conduct themselves in an ethical manner
- National Media Council established to enforce the Code of Conduct and mitigate disputes during the elections
- Media Market Forum supported to equip stakeholders with an improved understanding of media audiences and market trends to increase advertising income from businesses

### **Planned Outcomes**

- Support greater media professionalism in promoting greater transparency and accountability during the upcoming election cycle through media forums, candidate debates, and a candidate “promise tracker”
- Work closely with the Press Union of Liberia and young lawyers to enhance understanding of media laws while addressing needed reforms in the libel and definition laws
- Enhance the capacity of 21 community radio stations to provide uninterrupted, professional media coverage during the upcoming elections cycle and political transition
- Improve access to and analysis of Government of Liberia budget processes and expenditures at the national level
- Provide training education and training of journalists, editors, and researchers to conduct critical in-depth reporting on the planning and use of County Social Development Funds
- Market data available and routinely shared within the Media Market Forum, media owners, and advertisers
- Business plans finalized for partner media outlets with an eye toward increased financial sustainability
- Key recommendations on UNMIL radio transition made available to stakeholders and Government